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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 19, 1954

The Honorable Theodore C. Streibert  
Director  
United States Information Agency  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ted:

I read with interest your paper on the Strategic Principles guiding USIA action which you sent to me with your letter of March 1, 1954. In my opinion these principles are good and will contribute materially to a unified and effective USIA program.

In our activities we also recognize the significance of the themes and targets emphasized in your paper and, as you know, have been working very closely with your people in trying to achieve an allied approach to our objectives. I might add that I am in complete agreement with that portion of your paper which deals with the type of materials which USIA should handle, and feel that your expression of views will be helpful in avoiding possible overlaps of our activities.

As you probably know, USIA and CIA plus State representatives have recently drafted a paper further defining our respective areas of activity which should be a useful supplement to what is said in the Strategic Principles. I hope to be able to present this for OCB consideration soon.

Sincerely,

**SIGNED**

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

State Department review completed

CPP/CTBarnes/mb  
16 March 1954

Distribution:

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*USIA*

MAR 16 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Suggested Letter to Theodore C. Streibert

The paper referred to in the last paragraph of the attached suggested letter is in effect a new statement of instructions covering the white, gray and black fields. State, USIA and Frank Wisner have concurred so far and we will have it in your hands via

soon.

C. Tracy Barnes  
Chief

Political and Psychological Warfare

Attachment: 1



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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE DIRECTOR

March 1, 1954

CONFIDENTIAL Attachment

Dear Allen:

Although it is with considerable trepidation that I enclose some 18 pages of reading material, it sets forth our concept of the Strategic Principles we are employing -- our working hypotheses -- and will intrigue you, I hope, into looking into it.

We have developed these over-all ideas to assure a unified effort both in Washington and in the field, in view of our primary emphasis on specific country objectives, which originate in the field and represent the principal purposes of our operations in each country.

We conclude with a statement about our Global Theme (p. 16): UNITE THE FREE WORLD IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE COMMUNIST THREAT WITHOUT WAR. This will be receiving special emphasis during the months to come.

Sincerely,

*T. C. Streibert*  
Theodore C. Streibert  
Director

Enclosure:

USIA Strategic Principles  
Copy #30 (Confidential).

The Honorable  
Allen W. Dulles,  
Director of Central Intelligence.

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## STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

### 1. FUNCTION OF USIA

USIA is an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. It is employed in combination with the diplomatic, military, and economic instruments at the command of the U.S. Government, supporting their action and supported by their action. Its function is to affect the actions of governments of other countries by using communication techniques to influence effective public opinion within those countries, in order to further the aims of U.S. foreign policy.

### 2. BASIC AUTHORITY

The foreign information program derives its basic legislative authority from Public Law 402, which states:

"The Congress hereby declares that the objectives of this Act are to enable the Government of the United States to promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries."

A directive issued by the President and the National Security Council, "Mission of the United States Information Agency", states that the Agency shall be guided by the following definition of purpose:

"The purpose of the U.S. Information Agency shall be to submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communication techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace."

### 3. PUBLIC ROLE

The authoritative public statements cited define and govern the general purposes of the USIA, and prescribe its techniques and broad content.

They also provide, along with similar official statements, a public

"masthead". The activities of the Agency must be consistent with these avowed purposes.

4. USIA AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLITICAL WARFARE

The hostile intentions of the leaders of the Soviet Union impose upon the operations of the U.S. Information Agency a special character and special responsibilities. Although our publicly assigned mission does not explicitly point to our role as a weapon of political warfare, the current conflict of interests between the United States and the Soviet Union, in which each seeks its aims by methods other than the use of armed force, constitutes political warfare. The activities of USIA, as an instrument of national policy, must be viewed in the light of this fact.

5. PRESENTATION OF THE U.S. AND ITS POLICIES

Our National Security Council directive stipulates that we carry out our general mission, in part, "By explaining and interpreting to foreign peoples the objectives and policies of the United States Government", and "By delineating those important aspects of the life and culture of the people of the United States which facilitate understanding of the policies and objectives of the Government of the United States".

In presenting U.S. policy, we must look to officially constituted sources and authorized channels to provide that policy. Although we have a continuing duty to contribute to the formulation of U.S. foreign policy, in terms of information considerations, we cannot anticipate policy developments or promulgate U.S. policy and objectives on our own responsibility. Neither can we present to foreign audiences, in order to attract support, versions of U.S. policy so colored by regional adaptation or diversities in emphasis that the integrity of our policies and their global consistency is called into question.

The important aspects of American life we present are selected for a specific prescribed purpose. We are not required to present all facets of American life, nor is it our aim to create and foster an orthodox official version of America, a fixed detailed stereotype, although effective propaganda will require that we deliberately foster certain general assumptions about the U.S., and preserve an overall consistency.

Appropriate subjects of information programs are those aspects of the U.S. which show its people sharing fundamental beliefs and basic values with the millions of men and women the U.S. is attempting to win to its side. Examples include belief in a deity, in individual and national freedom, in ownership of property and in human rights, in a peaceful world and the common humanity of men and nations compromising their differences and cooperating in the United Nations. The military strength of the U.S., its economic system, its standard of living, its technical development and productive capacity make fruitful and effective subjects of propaganda if presented without self-praise in ways which show U.S. capacity to resist aggression and to give powerful assistance in the creation of a peaceful world order.

The test is whether the information or interpretation regarding America which we supply will serve as evidence to other peoples that "the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace" -- that we have common goals.

6. USIA AS A GOVERNMENT ORGAN

The role assigned to the USIA creates major sources of effectiveness and imposes specific limitations.

USIA is an official and responsible spokesman for the Government of the United States. What we say and do gains thereby a certain automatic significance because it is received as an authoritative and responsible reflection of official U.S. policy and views. We implicitly assert that we present only truthful material, and seek to create understanding on the basis of fact, not through distortion, deception, or suppression. But our official nature means we cannot purport to be an independent purveyor of completely objective information. Inevitably we will be viewed in some measure as special pleaders.

7. THE FACTUAL APPROACH

USIA is required to rely primarily on presentation of evidence, adherence to fact, and creation of understanding. The USIA is thus barred from the purely manipulative approach of totalitarian propaganda. It is deprived of the devices of convenient falsification, concealed omission, manufactured evidence, and spurious consistency which have been powerful weapons of expediency in totalitarian propaganda. It must instead depend upon convincing the minds and emotions of those it reaches that the facts it presents are accurate and the interpretations it proffers are consonant with those facts. USIA, as an instrument of the Government, is committed to the proposition that it must be content with the facts, and the facts will in the long run be the most effective arguments for our national interest.

8. THE PROBLEM OF UNFAVORABLE FACTS: CREDIBILITY vs. POLICY

Our commitment to the facts also commits us to reflecting some inevitable unfavorable facts: aspects of our national life which some in our audience find objectionable; apparent inconsistencies in aspects of our

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foreign policies; and policies which may seem inimical to the particular interests or views of certain nations or groups. The occasional apparent conflict between preservation of our reputation for accuracy and objectivity on the one hand, and the need to avoid national self-embarrassment or to support certain national decisions on the other, is a working condition that will and should continue. USIA would destroy its effectiveness if it either purported to provide all the facts, or visibly attempted to deceive world opinion about them. The conflict cannot be resolved finally and completely by any general principles or rigid criteria.

Two essential factors, however, must be taken into account. First: USIA is under no compulsion to provide all the facts, to disseminate all the news, or to report events merely because they command public attention. Second: USIA can take no action which would compromise its publicly-assigned role as a supplier to foreign public opinion of reliable evidence on U.S. foreign policy.

As particular problems arise, they must be settled on the basis of the particular situation and our assigned mission; neither "protection of our credibility" nor a particular policy aim is an absolute. A decision must be made with the full spectrum of our national interests in view, by those in the Agency who are responsible for ensuring that information activities are consonant with national policies.

9. TONE: PROPAGANDA AND COUNTER-PROPAGANDA

We further seek to avoid the ready application of the propaganda label by the tone and character of our output. This means that we avoid exaggeration, implausibility, and broad generalizations not convincingly supported, as well as strident polemic, blatant self-justification and

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shrill invective. We must preserve constantly in our output a general tenor of reasonableness, objectivity, and moderation. Thus we also underline the difference between USIA and what it stands for, and the propaganda of Soviet-Communism and other hostile forces. Our audiences' awareness of this differentiation is a long-run psychological gain that we cannot sacrifice for the short-run satisfaction of answering like with like. We must guard against the temptation constantly to answer blow-by-blow, hostile propaganda. To do so would permit the USSR to control the content and emphasis of our program. So far as possible, in fact, we must avoid activity that is visibly and obviously counter-propaganda-- a conspicuous reaction to hostile propaganda stimulus. We do not seek to score propaganda "victories" for their own sake.

This does not, of course, bar us from vigorous refutation of falsehoods or distortions of U.S. policies and objectives. These must be countered -- in our own terms, on grounds of our own choosing, and in keeping with our general mission. And where a hostile element presents a psychological vulnerability or target, we can and should take every advantage of it if it advances our policies.

Further reinforcing these considerations, we must maintain the tone and posture that befits an official agency of the U.S. Government.

These restrictions are not intended to make USIA a simple colorless transmitter of official announcements. Dullness will not prove we have not been grinding an ax. We are no less engaged in propaganda because we are to minimize the propagandistic. Within the limits given, we must exercise our best imaginative resources and ingenuity, in order to give our message and activities emotional as well as reasonable appeal, and

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deepen and extend our impact by increased subtlety, control, and insight.

10. RELATIONS TO U.S. PUBLIC OPINION

Our concern is with foreign audiences only. It may be part of our legitimate activity, however, to reflect or report domestic U.S. public opinion on international issues of importance to U.S. foreign policy, or on domestic issues of particular interest to foreign audiences, where reflecting or reporting such opinion advances the national interest and is required by our information policy. However, official national policy is the source of our direction, not individual judgments of U.S. public opinion or current domestic U.S. attitudes.

11. THE LIMITED SEGMENT OF INFLUENCE: ITS STRATEGIC USE

U.S. official foreign information programs constitute a very small segment of the total impact of the U.S. on foreign peoples and governments. The impact of the U.S. on other peoples is made by a vast number of sources largely beyond our control. This fact shapes our mission, and is part of the difference between the conduct of our political warfare and information activities, and the almost total propaganda and political warfare instruments at the disposal of Soviet power.

To secure maximum advantage from the small segment of influence we control, we must keep that fact constantly in mind, and direct our efforts with the utmost deliberateness, economy and precision. We must:

- (a) Secure the fullest possible coordination with other elements of U.S. power in the field of foreign affairs. The direction taken by USIA must coincide with the general tendency and tenor of all U.S. official actions designed to influence public opinion abroad. Unless our program rests firmly on a basis of national action, and derives from and is consistent with

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national policy guiding other arms of U.S. power, it becomes visibly "propaganda" by its very isolation, and ineffective through lack of supporting action.

- (b) Ensure that our resources are so deployed that areas and countries whose attitudes and actions are of greatest importance to U.S. foreign policy objectives receive greatest emphasis in our activities. Ensure also that our resources in any country are not diffused but are concentrated on those audiences which can best produce the actions desired. Our long-range interest must be considered as well as our short-term concern. At the same time, we must maintain certain minimum operations in order to demonstrate U.S. interest, or preserve audiences, facilities, or investments of past effort.
- (c) In allocating our resources, balance the political significance of an area or country or audience-grouping against our capacity to influence it. Political significance of an area does not justify effort to reach audiences that cannot be made significantly responsive. Similarly, the ready accessibility and responsiveness of an audience does not in itself establish that audience as a primary target for us. On particular occasions or issues we may wish to make what would normally be uneconomical use of our resources to reach a difficult special audience. Or an available audience may for some operations or issues present a target of opportunity which it would be wasteful to ignore. Such efforts must be the exceptions, however, each carefully weighed and judged on its merits in terms of policy goals.

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- (d) Ensure that non-official, private channels for carrying the impact of the U.S. abroad are given fullest opportunity to cooperate in making that impact serve our purposes. This cooperation must be conducted under safeguards that will protect us from charges that private U.S. activities abroad are controlled or sponsored by the Government and serve official propaganda purposes. The use of private channels and the ends to which they cooperate must be guided as fully as any of our activities by considerations of national policy.
- (e) Employ to the fullest all intelligence and research resources related to our activities, increase their availability to us, and seek the largest measure of support and cooperation from them.
- (f) Coordinate our activities with those of other free-world nations and international organizations so far as this is politically desirable and practically expedient. This will promote both more economical and effective use of our own resources, and more consistent, integrated, and maneuverable use of the resources of free-world propaganda.

In addition, we are authorized to use certain materials and carry on certain operations without attribution to the United States Government. Such unacknowledged communication with foreign peoples must scrupulously observe the limits and criteria established in the relevant official classified instructions and statements of policy.

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12. THE ADVERSARY

Our political warfare opponent is not exclusively definable as either

- (a) The Soviet Union, or
- (b) World Communism

The conflict is not simply an opposition of two world powers, or a conflict of ideologies. The leaders of the totalitarian system in Russia -- the leaders of the Communist party of the Soviet Union -- effectively control two instruments. One is the world Communist movement, comprising the Communist Parties of other countries; the international and national Communist front organizations governed and often created by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In a sense it also includes fellow-traveling individuals or groups who, from a variety of motives, serve as vehicles, supporters, or even camouflagers of Soviet-Communist operations.

The other instrument through which Soviet-Communism operates is the administrative machine and the armed forces of the Soviet Union and its satellites.

13. SOVIET-COMMUNIST POLITICAL WARFARE

If the USSR were controlled by an aggressive group seeking world domination, without Communism, it would be a menace still, but different in kind and degree, and our defense against it would correspondingly differ. If the world Communist movement were not the tool of an immense world power controlled by a group bent on world domination, it would remain a menace to the free world, but a menace to be met in different ways. What gives special character to the political warfare waged by the leaders of Soviet Communism is that it is conducted with the joint leverages of

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power politics and a comprehensive supranational ideology, in itself antagonistic to the free world.

The political warfare tactics of the Soviet Union's leaders are:

- (a) To ensure their own freedom of action by controlling the political outlook of the peoples of the Soviet orbit and the information that reaches them.
- (b) To keep the outside world as far as possible ignorant of the real conditions in a Communist state.
- (c) To influence the peoples of the free world over the heads of their governments, by all the resources of propaganda at its broadest definition, and to build up the largest possible network of channels for bringing this influence to bear.
- (d) To maintain very large armed forces, thus permitting a permanent threat of the use of force, and helping to produce a compliant and intimidated public opinion, as well as lower living standards through increased armaments necessitated in countries threatened.
- (e) To foment opposition to the consolidation of Western Europe, to further the belief that the economy of the European NATO area is threatened by the requirements of NATO, and to intensify economic stresses in the area in order to disrupt the West's defense effort.
- (f) To exploit Asian and African nationalism, in order to gain allies and make economic, political and military difficulties for the Western powers.
- (g) To build up suspicion of and hostility to United States foreign and domestic policies, in order to isolate the United States and disrupt any world-wide organized resistance to Soviet-Communist policies.
- (h) To intensify or create both divergencies among the non-Communist nations, and disunity and stresses within them.

#### 14. THE ROLE OF COMMUNISM

The Kremlin's political warfare seeks to use Communist parties and front organizations to make non-Communist opinion subservient to or acquiescent in the ends of Soviet policy. Its propagation of Communist

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doctrine is designed to serve these ends. The Soviet Union can vary its ostensible policies toward other countries as expedience dictates, and thus mask the threat it presents to them, while continuing to pursue its purposes through the apparatus of Communism. To do this, it must conceal the fact that Communism is in actuality the servant of the Soviet Union's leaders and of their ambition of world dominance.

15. THE STRATEGIC AUDIENCE

The public opinion we seek to influence, in order to produce changes in the international conduct of the Soviet Union's rulers, is not simply, or in present circumstances preponderantly, public opinion within the Soviet Union or the Soviet Orbit. These audiences are, of course, special and important elements in our strategy, and a primary concern of our radio operations. For the present, however, a very important determinant of the success with which Soviet-Communism can advance its policies is public opinion in the non-Soviet world, and particularly, public opinion among those who are not fully committed to opposition to Soviet Communism. This target includes those who do not recognize the danger presented to their interests by the imperialist expansive threat of Soviet Communism; who do not recognize that Communism is an instrument wielded by the rulers of the Soviet Union to secure assent to or support for their aims; who consider that they can advance their interests by avoiding commitment to either side, and thus perhaps secure advantages from both sides, or avoid the limitations and obligations that commitment would incur. The uncommitted also include those who do not consider that either side is identified with their interests, or are attracted by a belief that "neutrality" affords a position allowing them to brake the conflict between Soviet-Communism and the Western Powers.

So long as the conflict between the free world and the leaders of

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Soviet Communism remains in the present phase of political warfare, we are in competition with Soviet Communism primarily for the opinion of the free world. We are (especially) concerned with the uncommitted, the wavering, the confused, the apathetic, or the doubtful within the free world. Insofar as Soviet Communism seeks its objectives by means short of direct use of armed force it must gain the effective acquiescence of non-Communist opinion to the actions it takes or induces other governments to take in fields outside its own boundaries. It is in this arena that we can prevent further Communist advances, and thus induce its retreat. Communism cannot survive as a static system; deprived of the "victories" that nourish the myth of inevitable success, it must retreat. As that phase emerges, the strategic pattern of our political warfare can be expected to alter.

16. PROPAGANDA TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION

Our propaganda toward the Soviet Union is primarily straight, factual, unemotional news reporting, especially presenting a full exposition of U.S. actions and policies as they affect the USSR. This is supplemented by calm and reasoned commentary analyzing and interpreting important world developments and important U.S. policies and actions, and non-polemical materials correcting distortions and misconceptions about the U.S. The tone of our propaganda to the USSR is designed to be forthright, non-propagandist, and consonant with acceptance by the U.S. Government of official responsibility for this output.

We seek to demonstrate the peaceful and constructive nature of the policies of this Government, which are not opposed to the true and legitimate interests of the peoples of the USSR. We point out that the U.S. has no quarrel with the Russian peoples, but with the small hardened group of

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Kremlin leaders. We seek to show that the aggressive and reckless nature of Soviet policies, besides threatening the security of the U.S., also in fact threatens the best interests of the Russian peoples.

We preserve a distinction between the people of the USSR and the regime, and we avoid using material likely to offend any significant section of our USSR audience on national or patriotic grounds. We show awareness of the historical and cultural backgrounds of the various national groups within the Soviet Union.

17. PROPAGANDA TOWARD THE SATELLITES AND THE BALTIC STATES

Toward these areas, where the Communist system has prevailed for a relatively short time, where many retain a strong Western orientation, and memories of life free of Communism are still strong, we pursue a different course. Our propaganda here seeks:

- (a) To maintain hope and prevent demoralization under the weight of Soviet oppression, by evidencing continued free world concern for the peoples of these areas, emphasizing growing Western strength, reiterating our faith in their eventual liberation, and illustrating our conviction that the Soviet-dominated system will not meet the test of history.
- (b) To resist the inroads of Sovietization, by keeping before these areas their national and religious traditions, and fostering knowledge of free institutions.
- (c) To provide reliable, accurate, and relatively full coverage of developments in the U.S. and the free world, and accurate commentary on Communist activities in the satellites.

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18. CENTRAL CONTENT

The strategic use of the narrow segment of impact we control, and our limited resources, require that we carefully select the material which we bring to the attention of our audiences, and the devices by which we seek to influence them. The content of our operations -- our "message" -- must serve our special political warfare needs as well as our generalized long-term mission directly and concurrently. We must concentrate our efforts and present this content with maximum consistency, continuity, and coherence, in order to achieve cumulative effect, avoid diffuseness, fragmentation, and confusion.

To these ends, a sharply limited number of Global Themes will be developed and will provide the central and authoritative statement of our message for all areas and all media. These themes are not intended to serve as slogans, to be proclaimed as our message, or to be presented primarily as overt or explicit statements. They are statements of the views which we desire to see our audiences hold. In influencing them to hold these views we will most frequently be effective largely through indirection, through allowing the inference to appear as the inevitable conclusion to which audiences are impelled by their own interests, circumstances, and special characteristics.

The first of these themes, Global Theme I, follows. As additional themes are authorized, standing themes may be modified or withdrawn, or given different priorities.

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GLOBAL THEME I

1. PURPOSE

To set a single, dominant propaganda line, globally applicable, of continuing long-range importance, capable of development by all U. S. information resources, in order to give greater consistency, continuity, and cumulative effect to U. S. information efforts.

2. THEME

UNITE THE FREE WORLD IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE COMMUNIST THREAT WITHOUT WAR.

(In his State of the Union address, January 7, 1954, President Eisenhower said: "In the unity of the free world lies our best chance to reduce the Communist threat without war.")

3. OBJECTIVES

- a. To consolidate, extend, and strengthen the free world alliance.
- b. To create in the minds of our audience acceptance of the concept that the free peoples and nations are united by basic common interests; to convince them that these interests and those of the U. S. correspond; and to secure the greatest possible identification of the interests of important individuals, groups, and peoples with the free world-community.
- c. To counter Soviet-Communist efforts to destroy free world unity by fostering or creating divergencies, by fomenting internal political, economic, and social disunity among free world peoples, and by disrupting the progress and functioning of free world

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instruments of cooperation.

4. RELATED LINES

In promoting and supporting a free world-community, the following concepts contribute to the objective:

- a. Soviet-Communism is hostile to the interests, aspirations, values, and security of the free world-community.
- b. The free world-community must act together to defend and advance those interests which unite it.
- c. The policies and actions of the U.S. are in the legitimate interests of the free world-community.
- d. The true interests of the enslaved peoples within the Soviet Orbit are identified with the interests and aspirations of the free world-community.
- e. Free world unity is a fruitful association sharing the advances men and nations achieve in freedom.

5. LINES OF DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLOITATION

In our exploitation of this theme, we

- a. Encourage cooperation and collaboration with spheres in harmony with U.S. major interests such as regional defense groupings, regional or international economic organizations, and UN.
- b. Secure a solidarity in the free world based on a sense of positive shared goals rather than on fear of the USSR.
- c. Present "East" and "West", or Asia and Europe, as interdependent parts of a whole united in basic interests, to avoid the danger of a two-front psychological war.

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- d. Develop a psychological entity with which significant groups and individuals can more readily identify their interests (e.g., free labor, the professions, etc.).
- e. Present the United States not as the leader of an anti-Soviet alliance but as identified with the positive and basic interests of free peoples everywhere (including the voiceless peoples behind the Iron Curtain) by emphasizing U.S. responsibilities within the free world-community. This meets the psychological problem of how to present U.S. leadership without irritating sovereign peoples.
- f. Counteract the contention that the dominant political fact in the world is the US-USSR confrontation and conflict, by encouraging the idea that the solution of free world problems and the creation of free world strength are vital concerns of free people in their own terms and interest, rather than aspects of U.S. policy, or derivatives of Soviet ambitions which many in our audience may feel are remote from their interests.
- g. Foster the concept of "free world opinion", as a psychological weapon, both to strengthen the bonds of common cause in the free world, and to isolate the Soviet-Communist regime morally and psychologically.
- h. Prevent the growth of neutralist and third-force sentiment, by implicitly including all uncommitted areas and groupings, and by identifying their legitimate interests with the free world entity.

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8 March 1954

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The Honorable Theodore C. Streibert  
Director, U. S. Information Agency  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ted:

I have received and read with interest the memorandum enclosed with your letter of 1 March, on "Strategic Principles." I am passing it around to several others here in the office and we will let you have our views shortly if we have anything to add or subtract from your interesting presentation.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) ALLEN W. DULLES

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

AWD:at

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